# ACCESS





# To Business Opportunities

#### **1ST QUARTER ESSENTIALS FOR SUCCESS IN 2011!**

If your business survived to see 2011, congratulate yourself with a hardy pat on the back. Despite the economic downturn, you did some things correctly to keep your business afloat. In this first quarter, take the time to evaluate what you did well and what enhancements you could make to ensure this year's business success.

Everyone gets it. You are an entrepreneur. You are passionate about what you do. You work 12, and sometimes 18, hour days to get the job done. In the short term, this may be great for your business. In the long run, however, the results will be devastating to your business and your health. A best-selling author, E. Lynn Harris, died on a book tour because he had not taken care of himself. He died doing what he loved, but was it worth it? **Get a comprehensive, gender, and age specific physical** so that you may enjoy the fruits of your labor. Work with a healthcare professional to **develop a vitamin and mineral regimen** as a supplement to healthy eating habits.

Plan to **meet with your accountant** to get an accurate financial picture of what happened in your business in 2010. If you keep your own books, be sure that your accounting practices are solid and in place for 2011.

Once you have reviewed your numbers, evaluate the effectiveness of the software and equipment you used in your business for 2010. Is it time to upgrade software? If so, is the software available? Do you need a new printer or scanner? What would make your business function more efficiently? Whatever it is that you need, get it or start planning to get it.

The opportunity to learn is limitless. **Find and develop a list of all of your industry's trade events**. Purpose to attend at least one event so that you are able to stay abreast of trends, new developments, and technologies. Forecasting is key to your success. You have to stay "in the mix" to know when to move your business forward and when to maintain its current position.

**Examine opportunities to expand your business.** Can your business be easily duplicated, for example? Perhaps your business might benefit from a franchise expansion strategy.

**Update all business contacts.** You never know when you may need to partner for a contract. From that updated contact list, **host an opportunity to network with your potential partners**. Perhaps a small reception held at the beginning of the year would be a great way to let everyone know that you are in business and ready partner.

If you haven't already, **update your marketing plan to include social networking** venues such as Twitter, Linked In, and Facebook, to name a few. You can potentially reach thousands of people free of charge!

**Query customers, both current and former**. Find out why they have stayed or why they left. Be prepared to receive constructive criticism and to open your mind to new ideas.

Finally, **keep an issues log**. While this instrument is traditionally used in software project management, it may also serve to be beneficial in business. Use it to document and organize challenges which arise, their status, the means of resolution, and the impact of the actions taken. Review this information with staff periodically.

#### 10 Steps to Small-Business Success in 2011

Try these forward-thinking strategies to improve your business now.

- 1. Overhaul your business plan
- 2. Double down on what works
- 3. Experiment
- 4. Fire your D-grade customers
- 5. Become an 'A' customer

- 6. Expand your network
- 7. Leverage your brand
- 8. Get some credit
- 9. Fire up your employees
- 10. Team up



# **EBOCO Scores Operational Wins in 2010!**

Working to ensure fairness and equity in the procurement process

#### Contract and Legislation Review for Inclusion and compliance with Title 39

839 Pieces of legislation (97.14% approval within 3 days)

\*225 Contracts (94.22% within 3 days)

6374 performance purchasing items reviewed year-to-date.

#### **Contract Compliance Application and Certification Review**

**748** New

1567 Renewals

#### **M/FBE Certification Review**

**79** New

135 Renewals

#### **Registered Minority Business Review**

**22** New

48 Renewals

#### **Bid Specification Review**

\*\* 14 conducted year-to-date

#### **Departmental Meeting Presentations**

**87** Pre-construction Meetings

29 Pre-bid meetings

#### **Vendor Meetings and Business Counseling:**

30 Meetings conducted

#### **Targeted Outreach Presentations** including:

The Ohio Growth Summit certification seminar, the EBO "How To Do Business with the City "seminars, SBA Seminar, Statewide MBE/DBE Taskforce meeting, Elford Construction Workshop Presentation, the Central Ohio Transit Authority "green" seminar, the Columbus Regional Airport Outreach Event, the EBO Web Presence updates, and continuing the EBO ACCESS Newsletter and the TV show.

Utilization of Minority, Female and Registered Businesses is 22.48% for professional services, 6.39% for goods and services and 6.52% for construction for 2010.

\*Contract Review provides a key opportunity to determine the extent of minority and female inclusion on contracts, where opportunities could be gained, and verify that federal participation requirements have been met.

\*\*Conducted to assist City agencies eliminate any unnecessarily restrictive bid specifications that may adversely affect inclusion.

HOW MAY EBOCO HELP YOU GAIN ACCESS TO BUSINESS SUCCESS IN 2011? Share your suggestions by emailing us at EBOCO at EBOCO@columbus.gov



## **Outreach Events 2011**

"HOW TO DO BUSINESS WITH THE CITY OF COLUMBUS "

Wednesday, March 16, 2011 Wednesday, June 15, 2011 Wednesday, September 21, 2011

Seminars held at the EBO Office from 9:30am – 11:30 am

# Find It on the Web

Need information on starting a business or growing an existing one? These websites might offer just the right assistance!

## **EBO SERVICES**

#### **CERTIFICATION:**

Minority/Female Business Enterprise Certification—EBO also offers <u>free</u> gender- and race-based certification. Becoming a certified M/FBE makes it easier to identify those ready, willing, and able to perform on city contracts.

#### **Contract Compliance Certification—**

EBO houses the Office of Contract Compliance (OCC). OCC is responsible for ensuring that everyone who does business with the City of Columbus has a valid Contract Compliance number. To receive this <u>free</u> two-year certification, a company must complete an application verifying that the company is an Equal Opportunity Employer. The application can be found at the Vendor Services link on the City of Columbus website, www.columbus.gov.

#### **OUTREACH:**

**Business Start-up Counseling—**Want to start a business? We are happy to provide resources to help you get started.

**Bid Counseling**—Specialists are available to help certified businesses understand bidding requirements and provide training in responding correctly to bids and proposals.

**Outreach**—EBO offers a variety of outreach activities to help businesses understand the City's purchasing process and to provide technical assistance.

#### **REVIEW:**

**Legislation and Contract Review**—Specialists review City legislation and contracts to verify that contractors are selected in accordance with City purchasing policy and guidelines.

To find out more about our services, go to our website at www.columbus.gov and click on the EBO link

LOG ON TO: <a href="http://vendorservices.columbus.gov">http://vendorservices.columbus.gov</a> and click on solicitations for bid opportunities with the city!